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# THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

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The Official Journal  
of the Association of  
Assistant Librarians

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# THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE  
ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS  
(Section of the Library Association)

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HON. EDITOR: W. B. STEVENSON

Hornsey Public Libraries

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## Announcements

CIGARETTES are sent each month to the following members who are prisoners of war: Pte. A. C. Angel (Germany), F/O E. J. Clelland (Germany), Pte. A. Diamond (Italy), Cpl. G. L. Evans (Germany), L/Cpl. A. Fraser (Germany), Pte. R. J. Gayler (Germany), Sgmn. H. H. Goom (Germany), Pte. J. H. Grew (Germany), P/O W. R. Oldfield (Germany), Lt. A. L. Smyth (Italy).

As most of the particulars we have date back from 1942, it would be appreciated if notice of any known change of address in recent months be sent to Mrs. S. W. Martin, Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, London, S.E.24.

## Correspondence Courses

COURSES in all sections are arranged each season to run from April to May of the following year, and from November to December of the following year. Students wishing to enter for any course must obtain an application form and send it, together with the necessary fee, to Mrs. S. W. Martin, Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, London, S.E.24. Applications must reach the above before 20th March and 20th October for the April and November courses respectively. After these dates no applications will be considered.

For full particulars of subjects and fees, see the Library Association Year Book.

Before deciding to enter for both Classification and Cataloguing parts of the Intermediate Section, students are advised to make themselves familiar with the syllabus as printed in the Library Association Year Book.

In numerous cases students have written, after the Courses have commenced, stating that, under present conditions, they find themselves unable to give sufficient time necessary for the study of both parts, and asking that the fee should be refunded in respect of one part.

As it is impossible either to postpone a course, or return the fee, under such conditions, we would suggest that careful thought be given to the matter before the application for any Course is forwarded. This would save considerable time and expense.

## The Library Assistant

**NORTH-WESTERN POLYTECHNIC, Prince of Wales Road, London, N.W.5**

Classes for the Elementary and Intermediate examinations for the session 1943-44, commencing on 1st September, will meet as follows :—

### *Elementary Course*

Literary History .. .. .	Wed. 2.30-4.0 ..	Miss A. D. Nash
Library Administration, etc. ..	Wed. 4.0-5.30 ..	Miss E. Jowett

### *Intermediate Course*

Classification .. .. .	Wed. 2.30-4.0 ..	S. G. Saunders
Cataloguing .. .. .	Wed. 4.0-5.30 ..	L. M. Harrod

If sufficient applications are received for a Final course, every effort will be made to hold one.

### **SPRING GROVE POLYTECHNIC, Isleworth**

The School of Librarianship will reopen on Wednesday, 22nd September. The Examinations covered are the Elementary and Intermediate, each Course consisting of 26 lessons (approximately). The days and times are as follows :—

*Elementary* .. .. . Wednesdays .. 2-6

### *Intermediate*

Classification .. .. .	Fridays .. ..	2-3.30
Cataloguing .. .. .	Fridays .. ..	4-5.30

Students may enrol on the opening day of the Course. Fee for each Course, 15s.

Providing a sufficient number of students enrol, a Course of 10 lessons in Book Selection will be arranged. In respect of other sections of the Final Examination endeavours will be made to organize Courses should they be required. All enquiries to Mr. Harold Groom.

## Cataloguing for Examination Purposes

**A. J. Walford**

**S**TUDENTS of cataloguing have on several occasions confessed to me that the practical examples given in Sharp's *Cataloguing* (2nd ed., 1937, pp. 231-84) generous in scope though they undoubtedly are, do not fully meet present requirements. How is one to deal, students ask, with a combined index to two books, a very lengthy title-page (such as appeared in the December, 1941, paper), a series issued by a corporate body?—these, apart from the persistent anxiety as to subject headings and references.

Those who have not already done so are strongly urged to turn to Mr. McDonald's excellent article in *The Library Assistant* for October, 1939 (pp. 233-39), and Mr. Be Harris's note on "See also" references (*The Library Assistant*, January, 1940, pp. 17-18). I have ventured to elaborate on one section of the former, before proceeding to actual examples and the question of subject references.

## The Library Assistant

### MAIN ENTRY

**HEADING.**—Who is really responsible for the book's existence? If Sidney C. Hurst compiles a volume, *The Silent Cities*, "with the kind permission of the Imperial War Graves Commission," clearly, he is the author, although he may have been obliged to do research work among the documents in the possession of the Commission. If, however, *Medieval Latin Word-list* is "prepared by" three scholars "under the direction of a Committee appointed by the British Academy," then the focal point of responsibility shifts to the corporate body, **BRITISH ACADEMY**.

Rule 60 of the Code, Reports not by an official, is a stumbling block to many, since the necessary evidence as to the status of the author of a Government or Society publication is rarely available in an examination room. It is popular practice in public libraries to regard such an author as meriting main entry unless he is definitely proved to be an official. This is done, according to Mr. Hanson, "even though he is, in many instances, receiving a salary from the institution, and the latter is paying cost of publication." Mr. Sharp would appear to favour main entry under the corporate body when a work is issued under its auspices, published by its authority, or written at its request and with its collaboration. It would be unwise, nevertheless, to push this preference to extremes. *The American Speeches of Lord Lothian*, "issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs," clearly, has main entry under the diplomat in question, not under the society.

**TITLE AND IMPRINT.**—Distinct respect should be paid to the actual wording of the title-page, and omissions from the title proper should be indicated in the usual way. The author's name need not be repeated after the title; if the imprint gives three or four places of publication in addition to the London office, express thus: "London, (etc.), —."

### OTHER ENTRIES AND REFERENCES FOR A DICTIONARY CATALOGUE, comprising—

Added author, editor, compiler or translator, etc., entries; to include writer of foreword, introduction, etc.

Analytical author entries—preferably written out in full, as for added entry.

Author, editor, etc., references (for alternative form of name, etc.).

Title entries, if distinctive—written out, as for added entry.

Series entries. Only headings need be given (e.g., **CLARENDON ENGLISH SERIES**; ed. by David Nichol Smith).

Series editor references (prefer references to entries here).

Subject headings—to be restricted, usually, to one, unless the book is composite or definitely deals with two or three subjects; to include subject headings for series, if required. The rule of specific entry, thought to be so obvious, is consistently neglected.

Subject analytical entries. If several are called for, give one as an example, as for added entry.

Subject references—from synonymous terms ("see"), from collateral subjects, and also from more inclusive subjects, working back to the specific subject heading chosen from what is usually the equivalent of a Dewey class or division heading ("see also"). Examples of this appear below.

## The Library Assistant

### INDEX ENTRIES FOR A CLASSIFIED CATALOGUE

These should conform, so far as headings are concerned, to those for the dictionary catalogue, above, unless there is very good reason for ruling otherwise.

**Author index.** Give headings only, writing out references in full. Series and title entries should conform to those for the dictionary catalogue.

**Subject index.** Give entry-headings only, expressing references by a covering phrase such as that used by Mr. Sharp: "and subject references as for a dictionary catalogue, above."

The first two examples for cataloguing are both taken from the December, 1941, paper, and the first, at least, is of more than average difficulty.

1. The Book of Receipts Containing a Veterinary Materia Medica With Prescriptions illustrating the Employment of Drugs in General Use for the Treatment of the more Common Ailments of Animals Comprising also A Pharmaceutical Formulary For the Manufacture of Proprietary Articles, Toilet Preparations, Dietetic Articles, Household Specialities, etc. A Photographic Formulary, A Synopsis of Practical Methods employed in the Examination of Urine, Milk, Potable Waters, Sputum, etc. Together with numerous chemical and other tables likely to be of use to Pharmacists and Manufacturers. By E. W. Lucas, C.B.E., and H. B. Stevens, O.B.E. 12th ed. London, J. & A. Churchill. 1924. vi, 473pp.

#### Main entry

LUCAS, E— W—, and STEVENS, H— B—.

The Book of receipts ; containing A Veterinary materia medica, with prescriptions ; . . . A Pharmaceutical formulary for the manufacture of proprietary articles, toilet preparations, dietetic articles, household specialities, etc. ; A Photographic formulary ; A Synopsis of practical methods employed in the examination of urine, milk, potable waters, sputum, etc. . . . 12th ed. London, J. & A. Churchill. 1924. vi, 473pp. tabs. — cm.

#### Other entries and references for a dictionary catalogue

#### Added author entry

STEVENS, H— B—, joint author.

#### Subject entry

RECEIPTS.

#### Subject analytical entries

VETERINARY MEDICINE.

LUCAS, E— W—, and STEVENS, H— B—. A Veterinary materia medica (in their The Book of receipts, 1924).

PHARMACY.

PHOTOGRAPHY, *Formulæ.*

DIAGNOSIS.

CHEMISTRY, *Medical and pharmaceutical.*

Similar subject analytical entries.  
(N.B. DIAGNOSIS covers the examination of urine and sputum ;  
CHEMISTRY, *Medical, etc.*— covers milk and potable waters.)

#### Subject references

MATERIA MEDICA (see also VETERINARY MEDICINE). ANIMALS Treatment (see also VETERINARY MEDICINE). DRUGS (see also PHARMACY).



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DISPENSING (*see also* PHARMACY). PATHOLOGY (*see also* DIAGNOSIS). PHARMACY (*see also* CHEMISTRY, *Medical and pharmaceutical*). BEVERAGES, *Chemical analysis* (*see also* CHEMISTRY, *Medical and pharmaceutical*). MEDICINE (*see also* VETERINARY MEDICINE, PHARMACY, PATHOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, *Medical and pharmaceutical*).

### *Index entries for a classified catalogue*

#### Author index

LUCAS, E. W., and STEVENS, H. B.  
STEVENS, H. B., *joint author*.

#### Subject index

RECEIPTS, VETERINARY MEDICINE, PHARMACY, PHOTOGRAPHY, *Formulae*, DIAGNOSIS, CHEMISTRY, *Medical and pharmaceutical*, and subject references as for a dictionary catalogue, above.

2. Publications of the University of Manchester No. CCLXXVI. Theological Series No. VI. The Religious opinions of Milton, Locke, and Newton by H. McLachlan, M.A., D.D., Principal, Unitarian College, Manchester, Lecturer in Hellenistic Greek, University of Manchester. Manchester University Press. 1941. viii, 221pp.

[Shows that all three were antitrinitarians. Contents : John Milton (1608-1674) ; John Locke (1632-1704) ; Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) ; Milton, Locke, Newton, and other Unitarians.]

#### Main entry

McLACHLAN, H.

The Religious opinions of Milton, Locke and Newton. Manchester, University Press, 1941.

viii, 221pp. —cm. (Publications of the University of Manchester. no. CCLXXVI. Theological series. no. VI.)

### *Other entries and references for a dictionary catalogue*

#### Series entry

MANCHESTER. *University*.

Publications of the University of Manchester. no. CCLXXVI.

Theological series. no. VI.

#### Subject entries

UNITARIANISM.

MILTON, JOHN. *Criticism*.

LOCKE, JOHN. *Criticism*.

NEWTON, Sir ISAAC. *Criticism*.

#### Subject series entry

THEOLOGY.

#### Subject references

TRINITY (*see also* UNITARIANISM).

ANTITRINITARIANISM (*see* UNITARIANISM).

GOD (*see also* TRINITY).

## The Library Assistant

THEISM (*see also* GOD).<sup>1</sup>

THEOLOGY (*see also* GOD).

RELIGION (*see also* THEOLOGY).

### *Index entries for a classified catalogue*

#### Author index

McLACHLAN, H.

MANCHESTER. *University.*

Publications of the University of Manchester. no. CCLXXVI. Theological series. no. VI.

#### Subject index

UNITARIANISM.

MILTON, JOHN. *Criticism.*

LOCKE, JOHN. *Criticism.*

NEWTON, Sir ISAAC. *Criticism.*

THEOLOGY.

And subject references as for a dictionary catalogue, above.

The third example is taken from *The Periodical*, February, 1939, is literary, and is included on the plea that many students find this type of book far from easy to catalogue. Title reference has been preferred to title entry, although Mr. Sharp refuses even this to a critical work on *Hamlet* (*Cataloguing*, p. 239) on the plea that it is not the text of the play.

3. Johns Hopkins Studies in Romance Literatures and Languages. 1938. Royal 8vo. Vol. 31. La Calprenède's *Faramond*. A Study of the Sources, Structure and Reputation of the Novel. By S. Pitou, Jr. Pp. 174. 6s. net. Johns Hopkins Press.

"*Faramond* was the third and final novel of the Gascon writer Gautier de Coste de la Calprenède (1609-63). This study shows how the novel came into being, analyses the stories composing it, shows their sources, and considers the structure, characterization, and style of the novel."

#### Main entry<sup>2</sup>

PITOU, S—, jr.

La Calprenède's "*Faramond*": a study of the sources, structure and reputation of the novel. —, Johns Hopkins Press, 1938.

174pp. —cm. (Johns Hopkins studies in Romance literatures and languages. vol. 31.)

### *Other entries and references for a dictionary catalogue*

#### Title reference

FARAMOND, by La Calprenède (*see under* LA CALPRENÈDE, GAUTIER DE COSTE DE. *Faramond*).

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sharp (*Cataloguing*, p. 261) prefers "THEISM" to "GOD" as entry word and has the reference "GOD. *See* THEISM."

<sup>2</sup> The most frequent errors with this type of entry occur in faulty transcribing ("John Hopkins" for "Johns Hopkins"), in giving LA CALPRENÈDE author instead of subject entry, in neglecting title reference and in faulty series entry. Series subject entries are also frequently omitted.

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### Series entry

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, —.

Johns Hopkins studies in Romance literatures and languages.

### Subject entry

LA CALPRENÈDE, GAUTIER DE COSTE DE. *Faramond. Critical studies.*

### Series subject entries

ROMANCE LITERATURES.

ROMANCE LANGUAGES.

### Subject references

FRENCH FICTION. } For works by or about specific novelists, *see under their*  
FICTION. } names, as LA CALPRENÈDE, etc.

FRENCH LITERATURE (*see also* FRENCH FICTION).

ROMANCE LITERATURES (*see also* FRENCH LITERATURE).

NOVELS (*see* FICTION).

*Index entries for a classified catalogue*

### Author index

PITOU, S., jr.

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY.

Johns Hopkins studies in Romance literatures and languages.

FARAMOND, by La Calprenède.

### Subject index

LA CALPRENÈDE, GAUTIER DE COSTE DE. *Faramond. Critical studies.*

ROMANCE LITERATURES.

ROMANCE LANGUAGES.

And references as for a dictionary catalogue, above.

The final example is rather complex, being a combined index to two separate works, each in several volumes.

4. An Index to Sir E. K. Chambers's "The Elizabethan stage" and "William Shakespeare: a study of facts and problems." By Beatrice White. 1934.

Demy 8vo, pp. 170. 21s. net. Oxford at the Clarendon Press.

### Main entries

- (1) CHAMBERS, Sir E— K—.

The Elizabethan stage—.

— Index; comp. by Beatrice White. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1934.  
170pp.—cm.

- (2) CHAMBERS, Sir E— K—.

William Shakespeare: a study of facts and problems—.

—Index; comp. by Beatrice White. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1934.  
170pp.—cm.

*Other entries and references for a dictionary catalogue*

### Added compiler entry

WHITE, BEATRICE, *comp.*

An Index to Sir E. K. Chambers's "The Elizabethan stage" and "William Shakespeare: a study of facts and problems." 1934.

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**Subject entries** (index being entered with work concerned)

**THEATRE.** *History. England.*

**SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM.** *Biography.*

**Subject references**

**ACTING.**

**DRAMA.**

**PLAY-PRODUCTION.**

} *See also* **THEATRE.**

**ELIZABETHAN THEATRE** (*see* **THEATRE.** *History. England.*).

**STAGE** (*see* **THEATRE.**).

**ENGLISH DRAMA** (*see also* **THEATRE.** *History. England.*).

**ENGLISH LITERATURE** (*see also* **ENGLISH DRAMA.**).

**ACTORS.**

**DRAMATISTS.**

**PLAYWRIGHTS.**

} For works by or about individual actors, dramatists,  
playwrights, *see under* their names, as **SHAKESPEARE**  
etc.

**BIOGRAPHY.**

**ENGLISH LITERATURE.** *Biography.*

} For biographies of individuals, *see*  
*under* their names, as **SHAKE-**  
**SPEARE**, etc.

*Index entries for a classified catalogue*

**Author index**

**CHAMBERS, Sir E. K.** (2 entries).

**WHITE, BEATRICE,** *comp.*

**Subject index**

**THEATRE.** *History. England.*

**SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM.** *Biography.*

And references as for a dictionary catalogue, above.

Subject headings are the average student's continual bugbear, and one of the first fences to be negotiated is that of subject v. locality. It must be admitted that Cutter's formidable list of subheadings under locality is bewildering to many, and if the would-be cataloguer would only commit to memory some dozen of the more obvious subheadings under locality, he might save himself anxiety. The more common are :—

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| — <i>Antiquities.</i>                            | — <i>Industries and manufactures.</i>            |
| — <i>Colonies</i> (but, <b>BRITISH EMPIRE</b> ). | — <i>Laws, statutes.</i>                         |
| — <i>Commerce and trade.</i>                     | — <i>Parliament.</i>                             |
| — <i>Constitution.</i>                           | — <i>Politics.</i>                               |
| — <i>Description and travel.</i>                 | — <i>Religious life.</i>                         |
| — <i>Economic history.</i>                       | — <i>Social conditions.</i>                      |
| — <i>Foreign relations.</i>                      | — <i>Social life and customs</i> (plus periods). |
| — <i>Government and administration.</i>          | — <i>Statistics.</i>                             |
| — <i>History</i> (plus periods).                 |  |

Many of these subheadings belong to Dewey's class 300, a fact well worth noting. Naturally, only a basic selection can be given, and slight variations can be introduced (e.g., *Economic conditions. Economic policy. Constitutional history*). Again, a distinction must be drawn between **ARCHÆOLOGY** as a general subject heading and *Antiquities* as a subheading under locality; between **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS** as a general subject heading and *Foreign relations* as a subheading under country.

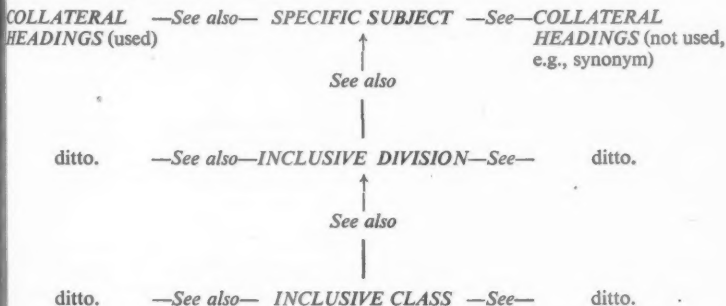
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It follows, conversely, that subjects such as GERMAN PHILOSOPHY, CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY, SPANISH ART, BIRD LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND will be given entry under subject, with local subheadings : PHILOSOPHY, GERMAN. MYTHOLOGY, CLASSICAL. ART, *Spain* (or, ART, *History, Spain*). BIRDS, *New Zealand*. Art and science subjects, particularly, yield to this treatment, the local subheading being expressed usually in noun rather than adjectival form. Faced with a title such as *Sketches of the Natural History of Ceylon*, and discovering that the work deals entirely, on the evidence given, with animal life in that country, the student should dismiss the idea of local entry (since a choice is more or less imposed) and favour the heading ZOOLOGY, with local subheading *Ceylon*.

In the case of Language and Literature, the heading is usually quite distinctive : it may be general (LITERATURE, DRAMA, LANGUAGES) ; it may be national or linguistic (ENGLISH LITERATURE. ENGLISH LANGUAGE)—including forms (ENGLISH FICTION. CLASSICAL DRAMA. ENGLISH LANGUAGE. *Dictionaries*) ; it may, finally, consist of individual writers' names and their works. The bridge between subject or literary form and person is adequately catered for by some such reference as that provided by Mr. Sharp. Examples appear in 3 and 4, above.

The provision of adequate subject references, and the formation of a subject hierarchy, as pointed out by Mr. Best Harris, is of vital importance if the dictionary catalogue is to be truly syndetic. While many students fail to be sufficiently specific in choice of subject headings, almost as many neglect references—not only from synonyms and collateral subjects, but from the more inclusive headings to others less inclusive, eventually linking up with the subject in hand. Having determined the specific subject heading, the student should then think in terms of the general class heading (and it is usually a Dewey class heading—LAW, RELIGION(S), etc.), and proceed from that broad terminus to travel back to the specific subject, stopping at as many important junctions on the way as possible, making his progress a kind of modulation of terms, linked by “*see also*,” with an occasional “*see*” for synonyms or terms not used.

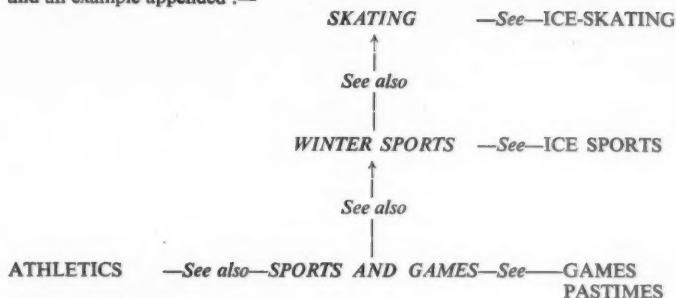
The idea might be expressed in diagram form<sup>1</sup> :—



<sup>1</sup> In this particular case, the hierarchy consists of three steps : it may well be shorter (e.g., *Science of Life*. Subject heading : BIOLOGY. Hierarchy : SCIENCE. *See also* BIOLOGY) ; it may occasionally be longer, as in Mr. Best Harris's examples.

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and an example appended :—



that is :—SKATING.

ICE-SKATING. *See* SKATING.

WINTER SPORTS. *See also* SKATING.

ICE SPORTS. *See* WINTER SPORTS.

SPORTS AND GAMES. *See also* WINTER SPORTS.

ATHLETICS. *See also* SPORTS AND GAMES.

GAMES  
PASTIMES } *See* SPORTS AND GAMES.



## A Fiction Policy

L. A. Burgess

**A**FTER two generations of wrangling I feel that today the first duty of a writer on the fiction question is to justify himself. Let me hasten to reassure the sceptics that my desire also is for a moratorium on all non-constructive writing on this most hackneyed of subjects. At the risk, then, of some sacrifice of modesty I am obliged to claim for my proposals the value of a constructive approach of significance even in wartime : perhaps especially in wartime.

The fiction controversy has today degenerated into the profession's No. 1 bugbear largely because it is *not* a controversy. The constant repetition of one point of view however laudable, must ultimately weary even the idealist ; and, at its worst, the whole affair degenerates into mere impotent scolding of backsliding chiefs by disgusted assistants. If the black sheep would only answer back we might all cheer up a little but they never do. Instead, confident in the superiority of ripe experience over callos theory they make use of the most effective of rejoinders : instead of arguing they just continue in their evil ways.

However, when all allowances have been made for *panem et circenses* in municipal life, we may still consider ourselves justified in concluding that the deplorable lack of cultural value in much of our fiction-provision and exploitation is due in large measure

## The Library Assistant

inertia. Librarians may occasionally in conversation (never in print) attempt to justify unsatisfactory fiction-provision by insinuating that "he who pays the piper calls the tune"; but the argument is too thin to be propounded seriously as a defence of what is, after all, indefensible. We should be on safer ground, I think, in assuming that the fiction muddle resembles the newsroom muddle in being, in essence, just an unwanted and unappreciated legacy from our Victorian past.

Of recent years Dr. Wellard has done us invaluable service in drawing attention to the amazing lack of social purpose or direction in the past half-century of librarianship. After the initial pioneer impetus toward bettering the working classes had spent itself, there remained no noticeable organic social purpose in librarianship, and the whole movement stagnated and drifted. The initial policy established the tradition, in which were incorporated two great ground-baiting features: the reading-room and the fiction section. Both were designed to lure the masses through entertainment: both have persisted with no other significance: neither appears to be defensible on these terms as legitimate expenditure of public money.

If, however, we scrutinize the history of librarianship as a respected and self-respecting activity, we shall soon observe that wherever headway has been made it is through the recovery of social purpose. First we began to take seriously our non-fiction stocks. We outgrew the confusion of the indicator days and entered upon a salutary phase of classification and cataloguing, when our journals were filled with battles of code and schedule (a phase still persisting in some quarters). This phase was essential to all later development; for without it there could be no balanced book-selection or calculated book-exploitation. Our "workshop" collections of today are the natural result and represent a deliberate planning-policy: in contrast to the good intentioned but impotent muddle of indicator days.

Later followed the phase during which a deliberate policy of intensive specialization built up our reference and commercial libraries and, in the period between the wars, our children's libraries. My point is that all these activities were not sporadic growths, but represent deliberate planning in terms of very clearly envisaged specific social needs. But there still remain today in many libraries two "no-man's-lands" without planning or conscious purpose: the reading-room and the fiction shelves. More and more library workers today are beginning to realize that soon, unless we can make up our minds about these activities, they are likely to be made up for us by post-war retrenchment or the modern equivalent of the Geddes axe.

In point of fact, many authorities, including my own, have actually adopted a definite library service policy in respect of reading-room provision. The question to be asked in this case is not the academic, Can we justify the provision of reading-rooms? Rather is it, What kind of reading-room provision will further the legitimate aims of sound library policy?

Similarly, with regard to fiction-provision, it is beside the point to discuss whether fiction should be provided in public libraries. Fiction provision is not a mere opportunist sop to Demos: it is an indispensable part of our cultural heritage. Consequently, our sole problem as librarians is, What kind of fiction will best further the cultural and social aims of librarianship?

At the outset we have to face the problem faced and solved by our predecessors forty or fifty years ago in respect of the non-fiction stock. The necessary preliminary to any systematic work on fiction-provision or fiction-exploitation is—*system*. Order must be brought out of chaos, and a *sine qua non* in this case, as in the other, is classification. Without it, how can we ensure a balanced stock or make any systematic

## The Library Assistant

attempt either to assist our readers or to assess the quality of the work we are doing. The limitations to personal knowledge of the books are obvious; and our position today in relation to fiction parallels that of our predecessors behind their indicators in relation to their non-fiction stock. There is no escaping the truth that if classification is a "good thing" then its virtues should be no less apparent on the fiction shelves than on those devoted to poetry or drama. A classification, in addition to guiding the reader to his preferences, provides a first-class tool for the use of the intelligent assistant in advising the public we do ourselves an injustice in attempting, without adequate reason, to dispense with its aid.

As far as the reader is concerned I think we should all recognize today that most of the time his apparent author-demand, where it exists, is really a disguised type-demand ("Horler for excitement," etc.). The bibliographical purist who wants access to the novels of Galsworthy is rightly catered for by the author catalogue. The man who asks for Cullum, however, usually wants (not very discriminately) "Westerns" and won't be fobbed off with Conrad because of his contiguity in an author sequence.

Fiction, of course, needs classification by its own criteria: we cannot waste time arguing the merits or otherwise of classifying by the main schedules of the library. Many years ago, before I had experimented with classification of actual stock, I propounded a scheme with a two-place notation. Today I incline to think that scheme too complex for present-day needs. A one-place expansion will give adequate broad cover: the medium does not lend itself to over precision of definition. Many of my readers will recall the case of Lenrow's "Readers' Guide to Prose and Fiction" where a very minute classification is adopted to the advancement of the author's immediate educative purpose; but the enormous proportion of cross-reference and multiple entries indicates the unsuitability of such minute classification for the purpose of shelving fiction in public libraries. As classification is a means rather than an end in itself, it is of course conceivable that greater minuteness will one day become both practicable and desirable. It should be unnecessary to add that fiction is classified by its theme or most significant feature.

Here is my tentative draft schedule.

- F General (defying classification).
- FA Love stories (of the simple narrative variety).
- FB Romances (including the picaresque and cloak-and-sword romances).
- FC Adventure (including "Westerns").
- FD Crime, detection and espionage.
- FE Mystery, fantasy and ghost stories.
- FF Humour and farce.
- FG (Other fiction of entertainment and escape.)
- FH Animal and nature stories.
- FI Biographical studies (including the phases of life, personal problems, etc.).
- FJ Personal relationships (including family, love, hatred, etc.).
- FK (Other fictional studies of the individual and his environment, or fiction notable for perceptiveness and sensitivity.)
- FL Vocational; professions and callings.
- FM Social, racial and economic conditions and problems.
- FN Special local studies of the home country (including dialect novels).
- FO Topographical and descriptive: overseas or abroad only.
- FP Historical.
- FQ War, famine, pestilence, revolution, etc.



## The Library Assistant

- FR (Other fictional studies of the community background.)
- FS (Alternative place for fictional studies of political and other special causes, propagandist novels, etc.)
- FT Utopias and the reconstruction of society.
- FU (Alternative place for philosophical, contemplative and religious novels.)
- FV (Other types of fiction by subject matter.)
- FW Literary experiment. (Literary methods or style paramount.)
- FX (Alternative place for collected satire.)
- FY (Alternative place for other special literary groupings.)
- FZ (Alternative place for collected short stories.)

It will be observed that the whole schedule can be grouped broadly into five categories. The first of these (classes FA to FG) comprises all fiction, the main value of which is entertainment. Necessarily there will be marked evaluative differences within this group or within any of the classes—as indeed within any of the other groups or classes. Nevertheless, the group as a whole is likely to be less valuable than the succeeding groups. Of these the second (classes FH to FK) introduces qualities of perceptiveness and sensitivity and challenges the reader by a criticism of life or standard of values. At the lowest level he is compelled to compare what he reads with what he himself knows of life and people. Clearly we have advanced a step in social purpose. The third group (classes FL to FR) brings the fictional protagonists into relief against significant background, human or material. Such fiction indirectly forwards education for citizenship. The next group (classes FS to FV) is socially purposive to the point of tendentiousness. The final group (classes FW to FZ) is a “form” grouping by literary or aesthetic significance.

The schedule outlined above will undoubtedly be open to criticism. It does, however, illustrate in concrete terms the possibility of accurate mapping of the field as a preliminary to a critical appraisal of our book selection and its catholicity. Granted a reasonable schedule it at last becomes practicable to deal methodically, rather than by a hit-or-miss “twopenny-library” technique, with the old lady who wants “another like the last” or the young adolescent who is not quite sure what he wants.

In passing, it may not be amiss to suggest the value of evaluation symbols for staff use in appraising books. We are all acutely aware of the dilemma of the reader seeking advice from a junior assistant who does not feel sufficiently well-read to give it effectively. Classification alone will undoubtedly help him; but why not give him the aid of an evaluation by his seniors? Proverbially, tastes differ, but not so widely that well-read librarians cannot arrive at some broad standards. The following symbols, carefully concealed, say on the back of the title-page, and of the author-entry card, might place at the disposal of the junior assistant just that second opinion which he most desires at the moment when he wants it most. The complete series is as follows:—

- a An established classic or work of first-class literary significance.
- b A book of great competence, literary or social significance; well above the average.
- c A competent book; would include most best-sellers.
- d An inferior book; the lowest category permissible in a public library.

In addition, the symbols + and — indicate features above or below the level of the category. The combination ± indicates a markedly unequal work.

The practical use of the classification and evaluative symbols in combination calls for no special remark here. It is evident that one may recommend a better book of the same class or a book of the same quality but of a different class — among other

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possibilities. Now, however, it can be done systematically, and policies can be formulated. Even an inexperienced assistant can make some use of the aids provided; and naturally more use can be made of them by more experienced or better-read assistants. Exigencies of space severely restrict the development of my case, but a few illustrations of the use of the schedule and of the evaluative symbols will not be redundant. A warning may not be amiss against the assumption that disagreement over placings and evaluations necessarily invalidates either the schedule or the evaluating device.

Here are some illustrative examples :

Du Maurier : <i>Rebecca</i> .. ..	FA	c
Orczy : <i>The scarlet pimpernel</i> .. ..	FB	d
Sayers : <i>Murder must advertise</i> .. ..	FD	c +
Wodehouse : <i>Leave it to Psmith</i> .. ..	FF	c
Morgan : <i>The fountain</i> .. ..	FJ	b
Lewis : <i>Arrowsmith</i> .. ..	FL	b
Cronin : <i>The stars look down</i> .. ..	FM	c
Sinclair : <i>Oil</i> .. ..	FM	b
Buck : <i>The good earth</i> .. ..	FO	b
Bellamy : <i>Looking backward</i> .. ..	FT	b
Shorthouse : <i>John Inglesant</i> .. ..	FU (unless preferred at	
	FP	a
Joyce : <i>Ulysses</i> .. ..	FW	a

The discerning reader will have observed in passing that we have now arrived at the possibility of significant statistics of fiction-issue. No longer need we vaunt vividly our non-fiction percentages : we may now prefer to study the ratio of socially or culturally significant fiction in both stock and issue statistics, and devote some thought to the exploitation of the more valuable part of our stock.

One device of proved value in this work is the "Selected Fiction" stock, such as we exploit in this system. The scheme turns on the availability of the non-fiction ticket for borrowing a selection of the best of the fiction stock—a legitimate form of subsidy. In addition to the established classics and what we may call, for want of a better description, the "lit. hist. honours classics," we include a generous selection of contemporary novels (not necessarily all the output of the favoured authors). More controversially, we include all translations : others, however, may prefer to make their own selection of leading foreign novelists without invalidating the usefulness of such a scheme. For statistical purposes, all such issues count as fiction. Although we shelve our Selected Fiction in a separate sequence at the present time, it is evident that this is not an essential condition of such a scheme : a distinctive press-mark would suffice.

In conclusion, it may be advisable to deal with the objection of the dismayed cataloguing-assistant, faced with the prospect of classifying fiction as well as non-fiction. It is really no more necessary to read all the fiction in order to classify it than it is to read the remainder of the library's accessions : the same standards apply and the same aids are available. Notoriously, most published novels classify themselves by jacket and title, and, alas !—evaluate themselves at the same time ! Beyond this, surely it is not too much to stipulate a modicum of bookmanship in handling fiction as in dealing with the remainder of the stock.

My aim throughout this article has been to place the fiction controversy in a new perspective, as a factor in the cultural and socially purposive work of libraries. This aspect of our work is not only paramount : it is likely to prove the sole possible standard

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of assessment in the future. In the post-war years our claim to take our rightful place among the builders of the new world order must be based, not upon narcotic-peddling, but upon conscious social purpose. It is hardly necessary to explain to librarians that social purpose connotes not any particular political, economic or cultural creed, but the intellectual, cultural, perceptive and discriminating betterment of the whole community and every individual in it. We have not ourselves to undertake the whole task, or to undertake it alone: but as partners and allies we can no longer afford to shirk any part of our responsibilities. Our fiction-provision is not simply a blind-spot: it is a hitherto-neglected field and opportunity.

## Correspondence

Public Library, Tooting, S.W.17.

The Editor,

*The Library Assistant.*

Sir,—

Mr. Muskett has published in your journal R.A.F. instructions regarding book classification. As a serving airman he has abstained from comment, but Mr. Medd fits the cap on by saying that for the combatant services libraries are of relative unimportance. He further asserts that the size of the libraries and qualifications of station librarians do not warrant the use of a professional classification system.

I suggest that for combatants no less than other people the object should be efficiency throughout. Had the R.A.F. consulted experts on libraries as well as on cookery they would have learned that:

1. Small libraries grow into big ones.
2. Flexible notations are as simple as fixed ones.
3. Books shelved in logical order help the student to assimilate an understanding of the subjects covered.

So long as librarians accept the view that their expert knowledge is not needed the Library Association will continue in the status which Mr. Medd deplures.

Yours faithfully,

R. WRIGHT.

Somewhere in North Africa.

The Editor,

*The Library Assistant.*

Sir,—

In an issue of the *Assistant* at the latter end of last year Mr. Shepherd, of Kent County Library, wrote suggesting the formation of a Forces Section of the Library Association, to try to guard the future of those of us who have had our career interrupted by the war.

Articles and letters in previous issues had shown that there is a great amount of uneasiness as to what is to happen when we return to the profession, and what our

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status will be ; the idea of a special section seems to be a great step forward as, by using a magazine as forum, it would provide a means for healthy discussion and the voicing of fresh ideas amongst those most vitally interested.

I offered my full support but unfortunately just at this time Mr. Shepherd was ordered overseas, so it was left in my hands. Having gone into details and formulated a workable scheme, I, too, was sent overseas.

It seems rather a pity that two such blows from fate should end such a great scheme, and I am writing this in the hope that someone who is still serving at home will be willing to undertake the task of getting things going. I am sure there will be no lack of support once the section is under way. Perhaps even a civilian librarian would be willing to help to avoid a repetition of the fate which befell the two previous attempts.

I write this as an appeal from those of us who are overseas and are unable to do anything in the matter. If anyone willing to undertake this task will write to me (I enclose my address), I will pass on all the information and ideas I have collected.

Please don't leave it to the other fellow as otherwise we shall get nowhere. I will put into touch with each other all those who write to me and I am hoping there will be many.

Yours faithfully,

R. V. KEYWORTH

(*Signmn., R. Signals*).

(Signalman Keyworth's address will be supplied on application.—Ed.)

## Nominations for Officers and Council for the Year 1944

In accordance with Rule 6 (e) of the Association, nominations for eight members of the Council are invited.

Nominations must be made by two or more members of the Association, countersigned by the nominee, and submitted in writing to the Hon. Secretary, Miss E. M. Exley, Public Library, Marylebone Road, W.1, not later than 15th October, 1943. Should the number of nominations exceed the number of vacancies, ballot papers will be issued.

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